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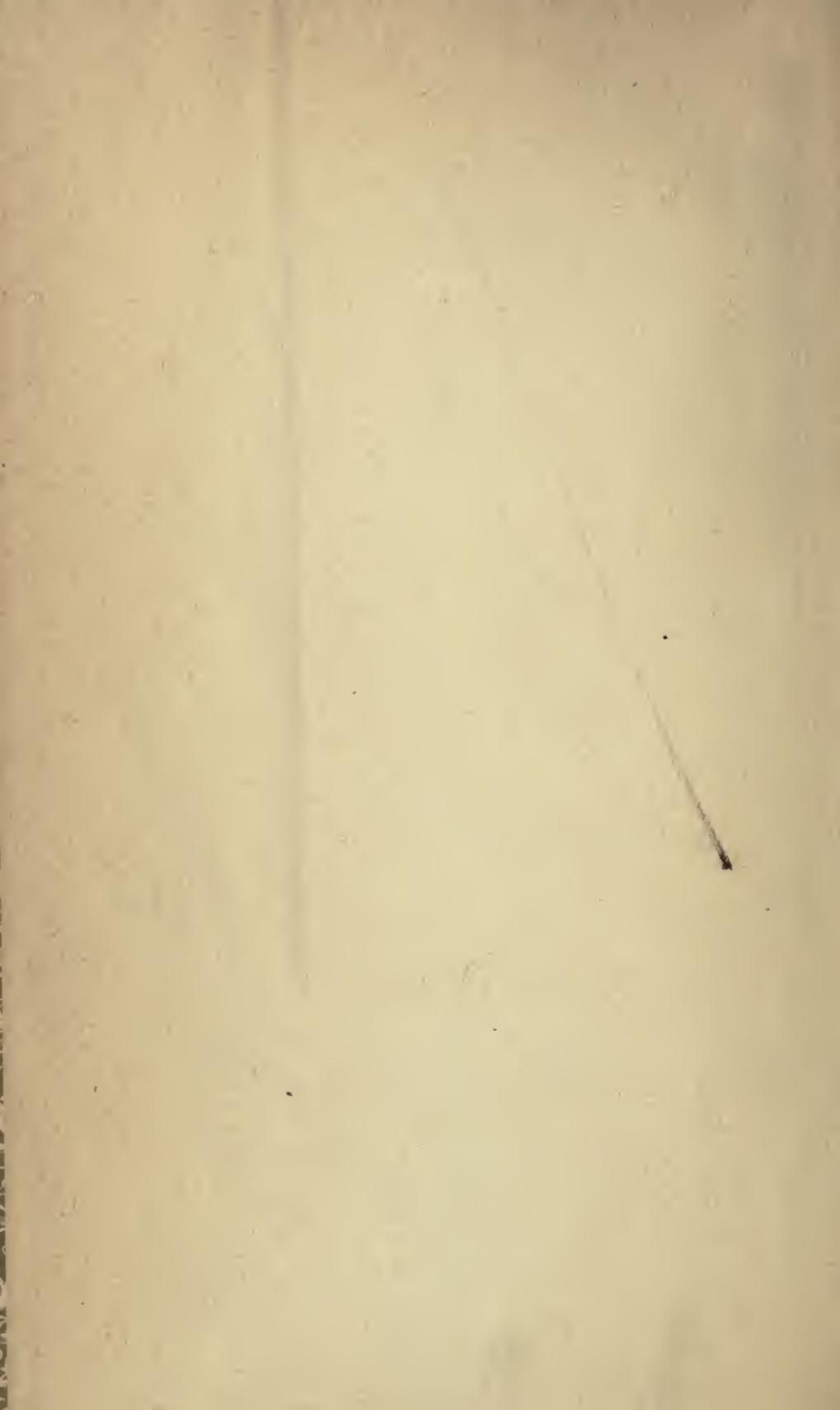
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LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

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S K E T C H

OF THE

PLAN

OF THE

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION

FOR SUPPLYING

A CHOICE LIBRARY

OF

MORAL, RELIGIOUS, AND INSTRUCTIVE

B O O K S,

FOR

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS, FAMILIES,
FACTORIES, &c.

WITH

A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE

OF

THE LIBRARY.

USES

IES.

Philadelphia:

RACKLIFF & KING.

1838.

RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
PLAN PROPOSED IN THIS PAMPHLET.
GENERAL

To T. Norton
From John T. Norton, Esq.

ALBANY, Sept. 28th, 1833.

Dear Sir—An effort will be made in this State the approaching winter to obtain a law authorizing a tax in each school district for the purpose of establishing libraries in each school. Should this go into effect, of which I have little doubt, our ten thousand schools may most of them probably be induced to take a good many of your books.

The subject of cheap school and other books is receiving increased attention, and your Society have great advantages, which they must be careful not to lose.

From the same.

FARMINGTON, (Conn.) March 11th, 1837.

The Sunday-school Union are, to some extent, prepared already to furnish suitable books, and could much sooner occupy the field than any new association. I know of no way in which the Union could do so much good, and I most heartily wish that it may enter upon it.

*From the Hon. Henry Potter, Judge of the District Court
of the United States for the District of North Carolina.*

FAYETTEVILLE, 30th Jan. 1838.

Dear Sir—I avail myself of your suggestion to express my hearty concurrence in the resolution of the last annual meeting of the American Sunday-school Union, requesting the Board of Managers to extend the "circulation of their publications—especially, in preparing and furnishing, at low

USEFUL LIBRARIES

FOR

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS, AND FOR FAMILIES.

As early as September, 1833, a distinguished merchant in Albany called the attention of the Board of Managers of the *American Sunday-school Union* to the use which might be made of our publications in public schools; and in May, 1837 a southern gentleman laid before the Board a file of upwards of *forty* letters on this subject, received by him in answer to a circular letter which he had sent abroad.

The substance of the circular was as follows: That there are 80,000 public schools in the United States, in which are taught from 2,000,000 to 2,500,000 children; that the moral influence of these schools is not generally such as to promise happy results; that the establishment of small libraries of moral and religious books, (such as are published by the American Sunday-school Union,) in such of these schools as might wish for them, would contribute much to their improvement; and that the individuals to whom the circular was addressed, would confer a favour by expressing an opinion whether there is any solid or sufficient objection to the effort?

In his reply to this circular, President OLIN, of Randolph-Macon College, Va., says, "I approve of the enterprise. It will, if carried into effect, arouse the energies of millions both of pa-

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rents and children, and will attract additional attention to the important subject of common education."

Bishop McILVAINE, of Ohio, says, "I believe such libraries as you indicate would be great blessings to the schools, and their neighbourhoods, and I see no important objection to the plan."

Judge DAGGETT, of the Supreme Court of Connecticut, says, "I can see no objection to the proposed plan."

Hon. FRANCIS S. KEY, of the District of Columbia, says, "I think your scheme for furnishing libraries to the common schools a thing very desirable to accomplish."

Chancellor WALWORTH, of New York, says, "I am impressed with the belief that much good would result from having a small and select library of moral and religious books attached to each of our common schools."

Governor VROOM, of New Jersey, says, "I think the institution may profitably expend a part of its funds in the manner proposed."

Not a single letter expressed an opinion adverse to the effort, and at the annual meeting of the society in May last, a resolution was introduced by *B. W. Richards, Esq.*, late mayor of the city of Philadelphia, which was seconded by Hon. Judge Potter, of the United States Court for the District of North Carolina, instructing the Board to take early and efficient measures to respond to the call thus made.

From among the four or five hundred publications of the society, one hundred and twenty-one volumes were selected, such as the movers of the plan seemed to contemplate. They are generally entertaining and instructive biographies; histories of the manners and customs, rites and ceremonies, of various countries and nations; and stories illustrating the great principles of social and personal duty, such as truth, forgiveness, temperance, humanity, honesty, obedience to parents, &c.

They are simple in style, adapted in matter and manner to the circumstances of school children, and most salutary in their influence on the order, prosperity, and morals of society.

The libraries are done up in uniform binding—each volume numbered to correspond with its number on the catalogue; and the lettering to be according to order—C. S. L. for common school library, or P. S. L. for public school library, or F. L. for family library, or C. L. for children's library, &c. They are put up in a plain case, with a lock and key, and all necessary hangings and fastenings. Upon the door the words **SCHOOL LIBRARY** are painted, which may be altered to suit circumstances. On the inside of the door we paste a catalogue sheet of the library, and furnish fifty catalogues besides, in which the design and contents of each volume are concisely described. These are for the use of teachers and pupils. The case is put in a box, and so packed as to be safely transportable to any part of the country, and the whole together is sold for **THIRTY-THREE DOLLARS**. When it reaches its destination, the case is removed from the outer box, and is all ready to suspend in the school-room, arranged for immediate use.*

A sample of this library has been exhibited to many gentlemen, and the expression of pleasure and satisfaction has been uniform and unqualified.

Two hundred and fifty sets only will be prepared at present, and for several of these we have orders. We suppose there are several thousand school-districts in the country, whose inhabitants generally will be glad to avail themselves of such means of moral, social, and intellectual improvement.

* These cases could be made larger without any material increase of expense, and thus furnish room for additional books, if desired; or they could be made smaller, at a corresponding reduction of price.

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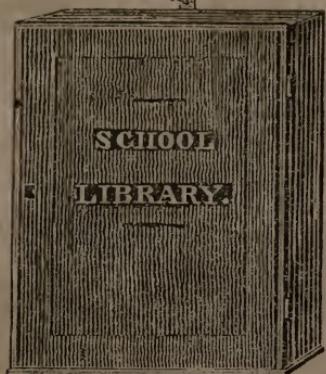


LIBRARY OPENED.

A few considerations are submitted to candid and reflecting men.

I. This movement of the American Sunday-school Union interferes with no rights or interests of others. We simply offer, to such as wish for it and will pay for it, a choice library of books for children at school. It is understood that the various school-districts are at liberty to purchase whatever class or kind of books they choose; and we place ourselves on a footing with all other publishers and venders of books when we offer our's for their acceptance. The field is wide enough and destitute enough to need all the labour that can be bestowed upon it.

II. It is not expected that this library will fully meet the exigencies of most of our schools. It is at best but a partial supply, though it will prepare the way, as we trust, for great advances in the size and character of this class of books. We are happy to know that the attention of good and wise men



LIBRARY CLOSED.

is turned to this subject, and we wish all success to their deliberations and measures.

III. The partial circulation of some portion of these books in Sunday-schools, takes nothing from the importance and usefulness of their circulation in common schools. In multitudes of places, no Sunday-school is or can be sustained for want of qualified teachers, or some other cause; and yet a common school is taught at least for a part of the year. The present circulation of these books, as we certainly know, does not give one copy to every five hundred children in the country, who are suitable subjects of common-school instruction. Their present influence upon the popular mind must, therefore, be comparatively very slight.

IV. That the books we offer for circulation are free from *sectarism*, (properly speaking,) will be sufficiently obvious from the fact that before they were published, they were examined and approved by a committee of two Baptists, two

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Episcopalians, two Methodists, and two Presbyterians. That they are evangelical in their tendency and influence, we need not say.

V. There is no new expense incurred by the proposed plan; no tax is imposed upon any individual or society; no extraordinary effort necessary to prepare this library. The types from which they are printed are *always standing*. It is only necessary to put the sheets upon them, and bind up the impressions, and the library is ready.

VI. The first and fundamental article of our constitution contemplates "the diffusion of useful information, and the circulation of moral and religious books in every part of the land," as among the primary objects to be accomplished. Of course, wherever the books we publish will do good, there it is our appropriate business to supply them.

Finally, Who that loves his country, or seeks the happiness of his fellow men, will hesitate to approve and promote a measure which must combine in its results the enlargement of the mind with the improvement of the heart—the cultivation of virtuous habits, with the opening of new and inexhaustible sources of pleasure?

By order of the Board.

ALEXANDER HENRY, President.

Philadelphia, 146 Chestnut street, Feb. 20, 1838.

CATALOGUE OF BOOKS

IN THE

ACCOMPANYING LIBRARY.

Vol.

1 LIFE OF GENERAL WASHINGTON.—The *general* design is to make the children and youth of America familiar with the history of their country, and with a particular knowledge of those events in which Washington was so conspicuous, and which resulted in giving us a name among the nations of the earth. The more *particular* design is to present prominently those moral and religious traits in the character of Washington which constituted his highest and most honourable distinction. It is embellished with original engravings, and contains an accurate copy of the Declaration of Independence.

2 LIFE OF COLONEL GARDINER.—Colonel Gardiner was slain at the battle of Prestonpans, Sept. 1745; and this volume contains a particular account of that event, as well as of his remarkable conversion from a very licentious to a very devout, godly, and exemplary life, which he maintained through all the changes and temptations of a military career.

3 MEMOIR OF A. H. FRANCKE.—A distinguished German of the nineteenth century, and the founder of the Orphan House at Halle. With a beautiful and authentic portrait, and engravings of the Orphan House, showing accurately the arrangement of the buildings and out-grounds, with explanatory notes. It is a full and authentic history of a great work of benevolence, and the record of a life presenting remarkable traits of humility, faith, and successful enterprise.

4 PIERRE AND HIS FAMILY.—A history of the Waldenses; being substantially an authentic account of the extreme sufferings endured by many of the families of that

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Vol.

devoted people in defence of their faith, and exemplifying, in the most interesting manner, the chief graces of the Christian character. With fine copperplate engravings.

- 5 EDWARD AND MIRIAM.—A highly interesting and useful narrative, making us acquainted with the habits and manners of the Icelanders, and with the sublime and beautiful scenery in which the island abounds; and the lessons of moral integrity and virtue which are inculcated are very striking and impressive. It has a map, and eight other engravings.
- 6 MEMOIR OF CAPTAIN WILSON.—Full of incidents by sea and land, and containing notices of the early Christian enterprises of the age.
- 7 LIFE OF PRESIDENT EDWARDS.—One of the greatest men that has ever lived. The volume contains a philosophical essay on the character and habits of the wood-spider; written by him at the age of twelve years. Embellished with a very perfect and beautiful portrait on steel.
- 8 LIFE OF MRS. A. H. JUDSON.—It contains every material incident in her most eventful life, and interesting notices of political events in Burmah. Prefixed is a finely engraved portrait of Mrs. J., and a large number of original cuts of scenery in India.
- 9 CUSTOMS AND ANECDOTES OF THE BEDOUIN ARABS.—Containing notices of the country and climate of the Arabs; their animals, dwellings, customs, clothing, food, government, &c.; with anecdotes from ancient and modern history, drawn from the best authorities. Few books are fuller of interesting and useful information.
- 10 JULIANA OAKLEY.—An interesting story to illustrate the sin and suffering which are involved in pride and ingratitude towards parents and teachers.
- 11 ERMINA: or the Second Part of JULIANA OAKLEY; showing the value of religion as a safeguard and support in all the changes of life. The customs, &c. of India are described with some minuteness, which adds much interest and value to the volume. Embellished with several copperplate engravings.

Vol.

12 JOHN URQUHART.—A youth of Scotland, of remarkable attainments in learning, who died before he was nineteen, leaving an example of eminent goodness and usefulness.

13 TAHITI WITHOUT THE GOSPEL.

14 TAHITI RECEIVING THE GOSPEL.

15 TAHITI WITH THE GOSPEL.

These three volumes are compiled from the most authentic modern travels in the South Sea Islands, and contain an account of the manners and customs of the natives, the influence of Christianity and civilization, and of the establishment of government and of the trial by jury among them. With twenty or thirty engravings.

16 EVENING RECREATIONS. Part I.

17 " " Part II.

18 " " Part III.

19 " " Part. IV.

These four volumes embrace a general history of Palestine, its geography, government, and inhabitants, with engravings: in a dialogue between young people.

20 LIFE OF PETER.—Bringing together the incidents of the apostle's life in an interesting narrative, with the illustrations and practical instructions suggested by the different facts. Besides a beautiful engraving, on steel, of the lake of Gennesaret, the text is illustrated by nine wood cuts; and it is written in an elevated, simple, chaste, luminous style; and is thus adapted to interest and profit the highest and most mature, as well as the younger and less informed orders of intellect.

21 HENRY MARTYN.—Its peculiar excellence is that it presents Martyn as an *imitable example*, rather than as an object of a vague and curious admiration. There is added to it an interesting account of Abdoole Meseeh, a Hindoo; and the volume is embellished by fine copperplate engravings.

22 OMAR.—An exposition of the history of the Jews from the Roman invasion to the birth of Christ, a period of about

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- sixty-three years. It is put in the attractive form of a narrative made by a father to his family.
- 23 INDIA MISSION.**—This is suited to all classes of readers. The history is full of striking incidents, and the customs, manners, and religious rites of the people furnish many interesting passages. The volume is illustrated by a map, showing the different *languages* spoken in India; a map of Burmah; and wood engravings representing the banian-tree, Hindoo idols, the ceremony of hook-swinging, the offering of children to Gunga, a Lancasterian school-house in India, a native Batta, and a Calcutta school-girl.
- 24 LIFE OF OBERLIN.**—Exhibiting a remarkable instance of Christian benevolence and of successful efforts to elevate the intellectual and moral condition of a country-parish in the north of France. The engravings are beautiful.
- 25 MEMOIR OF CATHERINE BROWN.**—The first convert to Christianity from among the Cherokee Indians; with a particular account of the circumstances of her death, at the age of twenty-three years; with several original engravings. The appendix contains a sketch of the Cherokee nation.
- 26 ORISSA; or, a history of the efforts to propagate the Gospel in the province of the celebrated temple of Jugernaut. With a map and ten engravings.**
- 27 LIFE OF DANIEL.**—Containing a sketch of the history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel; a minute biography of Daniel, presenting various interesting features of Jewish scenery, manners, &c., illustrated by a map drawn and engraved expressly for this work, and a variety of cuts, one of which is copied from Martin's celebrated picture of Belshazzar's feast.
- 28 WINTER EVENINGS' CONVERSATIONS ON THE WORKS OF GOD.**—Designed to explain and illustrate the various phenomena of nature; and to draw from them religious instruction. It has several engravings.
- 29 LIFE OF ELISHA.**—Designed to unfold the manners and customs of the time, and to explain the historical allu-

sions which are wrought into the prophet's life :—in short, to divest the history of every thing which gives it an unreal aspect in the view of the youthful mind, and to render it entirely intelligible that such a man as Elisha actually lived amongst men. With several engravings.

30 EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

—Designed to be a text-book on this subject, and already extensively adopted, as such, in several of our literary institutions.

31 LIFE OF KING DAVID.—This is one of the most interesting biographical sketches which can be put into the hands of children and youth. It is illustrated by a variety of original cuts; a map of the travels of David, prepared expressly for this volume; and a very useful appendix of references, tables, &c.

“ These three volumes (*Life of David*, *Life of Elijah*, and *Life of Elisha*) should have place in the religious department of every juvenile library. The mother should read them with her little ones, for she as well as they may receive benefit from their pages.”—*Mother's Magazine*.

32 SELUMIEL; OR, A VISIT TO JERUSALEM.—A most interesting little volume, embodying all that is known with certainty respecting the various scenes in and around Jerusalem. A fine frontispiece represents a class of boys with their teacher examining a map of Jerusalem. The story presents to the reader two Jewish lads, who, with their uncle Selumiel, go up to Jerusalem to celebrate the pass-over, about ten years after our Saviour's death. The volume furnishes a rich variety of information respecting the Jewish history, worship, and general customs.

33 ELISAMA; OR, THE CAPTIVITY AND RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.—Including the period of their history from the year 606 to 408, B.C. By a well-arranged conversation between some boys, we are carried through the successive changes in the history of the Jews, as they were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar; their residence there; the capture of Babylon by Darius; the restoration of the Jews under Cyrus; the rebuilding of the temple; reformation in the time of Ezra; zeal of Nehemiah, &c.

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- 34 LIFE OF MOSES.—An original work, adorned with a beautiful steel frontispiece, representing Moses with the tables of the law literally engraved upon the plate; a fine coloured map made expressly for the work, and eleven wood engravings, from the best designs, illustrating the most important incidents of the history.
- 35 HISTORY OF SANDWICH ISLANDS.—Embracing an account of the efforts to propagate Christianity there. With a variety of maps and beautiful explanatory cuts.
- 36 LIFE OF ELIJAH.—The time, place, and circumstances of the great incidents in the prophet's life are so presented as to explain the sacred narrative, and impress its lessons. With a variety of engravings.
- 37 ANN CONNOVER.—“If the suggestions made in these pages were generally regarded by persons at service, as well as by their employers, a great deal of misery and guilt would be saved, and every class of society would feel the happy change.”—*National Intelligencer*.
- 38 LIFE OF T. T. THOMASON.—Containing a variety of interesting facts respecting the progress of education and civilization in India, and presenting an eminent example of humility and benevolence.
- 39 ALICE BROWN.—An account of the resignation of an intelligent child in sickness, and her peace in dying.
- 40 LIFE OF PHILIP JAMES SPENER.—A German of distinguished piety, learning, and benevolence, who lived in the seventeenth century, and was one of the principal founders of the famous University of Halle. With an authentic portrait.
- 41 LIFE OF JACOB AND HIS SON JOSEPH.—The life of Joseph will always be one of the most favourite narratives in the school and in the family; and the present work is written and published in a manner worthy of a standard work.
- 42 THE BELOVED DISCIPLE; OR, LIFE OF THE APOSTLE JOHN.—It is an admirable narrative of facts

and characters. The author has shown much tact in improving every incident and event for the instruction of youthful readers. As a whole, it is an excellent book for children. It inculcates the best dispositions by precept and example, and is in temper and matter adapted to make good children. Instead of a large map, requiring constant reference, numerous small maps, or sections, are used, wherever such reference is important. This method keeps up the knowledge of the general geography of the countries, and impresses the relative situation of the several places.

43 { 1. SKETCHES FROM THE BIBLE.
2. BEWARE OF THE DOG.

The former conveying the elementary truths of the Bible in the simplest language; and the latter illustrating the nature and fruits of faith.

44 SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS. Vol. I.

45 " " Vol. II.

Or the manners and customs, rites and ceremonies of the Jews, explained by engravings and notes. In two parts, but not necessarily connected with each other. Part I. on the agriculture, dwellings, meals, books, tents, sacred utensils, altars, &c. Part II. on the customs of war, worship, &c.

46 THE FIVE APPRENTICES.—The sins and dangers of apprentices pointed out. With a beautiful frontispiece, and other appropriate cuts.

47 TRAVELS ABOUT HOME. Part I.

48 " " Part II.

This is an admirable little work, as fascinating as almost any in the whole series. The author has shown great tact in the adaptation of style, subjects, and reflections to the youthful reader. It will be as profitable to parents as to children, and will suggest a variety of means to make home the centre of all that is interesting to their charge.

49 ELLEN CARROL.—An interesting story of an orphan child, designed to illustrate the principles of charity or love, and to show in what manner they influence and control the evil dispositions of the heart, and lead a

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- child to forgive, as she hopes to be forgiven. With original cuts, and a beautiful frontispiece.
- 50 COUSIN CLARA.—Being the sequel to Ellen Carroll, and having a like design.
- 51 ROBERT BENTON, and LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER.—The former illustrates the origin, growth, and consequences of a habit of procrastination, in scenes of real life, and is well fitted to interest and deeply impress the minds of youth. The latter is an interesting story of a boy in India.
- 52 RUTH LEE.—A story designed to illustrate the strength of good principles leading to the discharge of the most difficult duties of relative and social life, in the midst of unusual trials.
- 53 THE RINGLEADER.—Illustrating, in a very interesting and forcible manner, by scenes in which boys are accustomed to be engaged, the evils of bad company; the progress and consequences of sinful habits, and the folly and madness of those who fall into them. With a beautiful frontispiece, and fine original engravings.
- 54 THE HARVEY BOYS.—This book received the society's premium of \$100. It presents the progress and the evils of intemperance, by a variety of scenes in common life; and points out the proper antidote to the habit, and all its attendant evils. It is in the form of conversations between Mr. Harvey and his sons, upon various subjects suggested by the observation of the boys. The style is remarkably well adapted to its purpose, being simple and perfectly intelligible to children, without being enfeebled or disfigured with mere childish expressions. As a work intended for the *whole* country, it seems admirably calculated to impress the minds not only of children, but of adults too, with right principles.
- 55 NATURAL HISTORY. Vol. I.
- 56 " " " Vol. II.
- Containing the elements of the science in a form, language, and mode of illustration suited to young children;

and furnishing at once a variety of useful information, blended with simple religious truths. It has nearly fifty engravings.

57 ELNATHAN.—A narrative designed to illustrate the peculiarities of the religion, laws, and country of the ancient Israelites, by a sketch of a Jewish family, and their ordinary customs and conversations.

58 FAMILY CONVERSATIONS.—Exhibiting, in an interesting manner, the principal grounds on which the Bible is received as true, without designing to refute the objections of infidelity. The conversations, many of which actually took place, are between a father and mother and their three children, one son and two daughters, from twelve to seventeen years old.

59 THE LIFE OF COTTON MATHER.—Containing an account of the early life of Dr. Mather, his method of teaching his children, and of his peculiar habits, religious exercises, &c. With an original preface by Dr. Watts.

60 FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.

61 LAST DAY OF THE WEEK.

62 WEEK COMPLETED.

These three volumes are designed to teach the proper improvement of the several portions of our time; and beautifully illustrate the comfort and happiness of a well-regulated Christian family, by a contrast with one where no regular system prevails.

63 MY GRANDFATHER GREGORY.—A series of familiar lessons upon some of the common mistakes of children and youth; illustrated by very entertaining anecdotes and touching incidents, and a large number of fine engravings.

64 SISTER MARY'S STORIES.—Few persons, of any age, can read these volumes without interest and profit, and yet the style is adapted, with unusual success, to the capacities and attainments of children. The volume is embellished by nineteen wood engravings, some of which are of very superior character, and will, we believe, please the most fastidious.

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- 65 DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.—Compiled from Josephus, and containing notices of the geography of the Holy Land, and a sketch of the history of the Jews since their dispersion.
- 66 THE FIRST MAN.—Well written, in a neat style, adapted to the capacities of juvenile readers, and is replete with such facts and sentiments as every enlightened Christian parent would wish to impress on the minds of his children.
- 67 HISTORY OF THE DELAWARE AND IROQUOIS INDIANS.—This is an authentic history of two tribes of Indians, formerly inhabiting the middle States; with various anecdotes illustrating their manners and customs. Embellished with a map of North America, and with original and appropriate engravings.
- 68 THE DAIRYMAN'S DAUGHTER.—Universally admired, and too well known to need a description.
- 69 LIFE OF JOHN KNOX.—An original memoir, containing a brief and authentic account of this distinguished man, and a history of the condition of Scotland from the third century down to his time. Prefixed to the volume is a beautiful portrait of Knox; and it contains also an accurate engraving of his splendid monument, erected in Glasgow, by the citizens of Scotland, in 1826; and an account of the imposing ceremonies which attended its erection.
- 70 LIFE OF LEGH RICHMOND.—With a beautiful portrait. Few volumes, it is presumed, could be found in family libraries, so attractive, so well written, so replete with lessons of wisdom, as this little volume.
- 71 GEORGE WILSON AND HIS FRIEND.—Showing the ways in which young people may do good to their associates and fellow men.
- 72 OLIVE SMITH.—An excellent collection of precepts and incidents, teaching lessons of wisdom to those who would be wise and happy in their course of life. The work is suited to all readers, especially females, as well as to domestics, and the conversations will be found to contain

much practical good sense for family use in regard to company, dress, amusements, and duties.

73 MEMOIR OF AN OFFICER, LATE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY.—This is a highly instructive narrative, showing the reciprocal influence of licentiousness and unbelief. The memoir was prepared by an officer of the army, who served with the subject of it; and it may be specially recommended to boys, to lads at school and college, to military men, and to men of sceptical dispositions.

74 THE HOUSE OF REFUGE.—An accurate history of the House of Refuge in the city of Philadelphia; describing the arrangement and uses of the buildings and various apartments; the discipline, instruction, amusements, &c. of the house. With engravings of the play-ground, school-room, chapel, dining-hall, work-shops, &c.

75 THE INFIDEL CLASS.—This is designed as a sequel to "The House of Refuge." A particular account is given of a class of lads, formed in the House of Refuge in Philadelphia, to be specially instructed in the evidences of Christianity, which they had disbelieved. The manner and effect of this instruction are stated, with a variety of anecdotes, illustrations, &c.

76 MEMOIRS OF SERGEANT DALE.—A very interesting story of a soldier in India, who wisely educated his daughter; with an account of the singular providence of God in restoring an orphan to her friends.

77 POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.—Illustrating the danger and strength of early associations and impressions in producing superstitious fears and notions, and the folly and groundlessness of such fears.

78 LITTLE THEODORE.—The principal value of the work is the simplicity of its advice to children. It has a beautiful frontispiece on steel.

79 THE FIRST FALSEHOOD.—A lively narrative, illustrating the importance of a strict and habitual adherence to truth, and the danger of the first and least departure from it.

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80 ELECTION DAY.—Designed to show the temptations and sins to which boys are often exposed on public occasions; and containing much salutary counsel and valuable information.

81 LIFE OF REV. JOHN NEWTON.—Compiled from his auto-biography and Cecil's Remains. The volume embraces an account of the colonizing efforts on the coast of Africa, with engravings of scenery, &c., and also an authentic portrait of Mr. Newton.

82 { 1. THE AFFECTIONATE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.—The beautiful history of Ruth, accompanied with explanations of Jewish customs, and appropriate reflections. Fine original cuts.

{ 2. ROBERT HAMET, THE LAME COBBLER.—Illustrating the right sources of contentment under the adversities of life, the pains of sickness, and all the fears of death. With fine original cuts.

83 { 1. FATHER'S STORIES.

{ 2. BUSY BEE.

{ 3. WISE KING.

{ 4. ABIJAH.

The second story shows the worth of neat and industrious habits; and all are designed to illustrate important moral truths.

84 HEBREW CUSTOMS.—Mr. Barker, with his family, consisting of two daughters, and a little son, are visited by Mr. Lewis, who has just returned from various eastern countries, and who gives an interesting account of oriental manners and customs, with twenty original cuts.

85 THE BROKEN HYACINTH.—A very interesting story, designed to show the unhappy consequences of pride, envy, and ill-nature, not only to ourselves, but to our associates; and also the excellence and happy influence of kindness over all the relations of life; with a fine steel frontispiece.

86 ANNA ROSS.—Illustrating, by a variety of entertaining incidents, the good and bad characters which are found among children and youth.

87 MEMOIR OF SUSANNAH E. BINGHAM.—One

of our most interesting biographies, showing the influence of religion in the ordinary walks of country life. It is written in a very simple, perspicuous style, and contains nothing merely to fill up, or make a book; its whole spirit is delightful.

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That the books of the Union are perfectly free from all sectarian peculiarities, and are admirably adapted to the use of Sabbath-schools, all will admit; but their intrinsic merit sets up a claim to a more extensive circulation. As helps in Bible-classes, in family reading, and in private studies, many of them are of great utility. The Union Bible Dictionary, Geography with Maps, Christian Researches, Biblical Antiquities, with their illustrations—every reader of the Bible ought to possess. Indeed, so far as I have examined, there is a mass of useful and interesting reading well calculated to improve both the mind and the heart, and which may be read with profit as well by the learned as the unlearned.

A circulating library, judiciously formed out of these materials, and located in every town and village, would contribute vastly to the intellectual and moral improvement of the great mass of our population. And I would particularly recommend to the patrons of common schools the libraries selected by the Board of Managers; they are composed of cheap and choice books, well adapted in all respects to such a use. The maxim that "knowledge is power and truth is knowledge," is assented to, I believe, in all free and Christian countries; but it is not sufficiently carried out in practice. If we would be an intelligent community, we must be a reading community and if we would be a happy people, we must be a moral and religious people. The foundation of all intellectual, moral and religious culture, (save the very inception at the mother's knees,) should be laid in primary schools. Sabbath-schools furnish a safe, broad, and sure foundation, and an excellent starting point. The common schools are, in a good degree, supplied from them—and these again are nurseries for higher schools. Thus, in a well regulated system of education, there is no collision—each class of schools harmonizes with the whole. It is important, however, to begin right. The Gaelic proverb says, "It is not easy to straighten in the oak the crook that grew in the sapling." We should therefore endeavour to keep our ~~saplings~~ straight; and I know of no better way for doing this, than by a judicious system of education, with proper instructors and suitable books. Such books are to be found in the stock here recommended. We know the worth of a thing by the want of it. The facilities for education which the world now enjoys, would, in

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my day, have been considered one of the richest boons with which a kind Providence could have blessed us. I, therefore, can rightly appreciate the books I recommend. In them I think I see the elements of all that is useful to man.

Extract of a letter from President Young, of Danville, Ky.

I heartily approve of the plan, and think that it would succeed to some extent immediately, and to a very great extent ultimately, in all those States in which there is a common school system. It would certainly elevate and purify common schools by a direct influence, and ultimately, by an indirect influence, it would extend them.

The idea of furnishing libraries to common schools has been entertained for some time. I have not a doubt that very soon they will be introduced into schools, and that the plan of having them will in time become universal. The wants of the age demand them. Public attention is beginning to be turned to the subject, and the work of furnishing such libraries will soon be commenced in some quarter or other. Now it is highly desirable that such an establishment as the American Sunday-school Union shall take the business in hand, as they possess the means of doing it *cheaply*, and doing it in *the best way*. Their publications are moral—the morality based on the only true ground, the Bible; and the union of individuals of various sects would guaranty against sectarian publications, of which there would be danger if the publications should issue from the press of either an individual, or a company chartered for the purpose, with a view to make gain.

From Rev. J. B. Taylor, of the Bap. Ch., Richmond, (Va.)

If a good assortment of reading books were placed within the reach of youth in our common schools, the tendency would be to awaken many dormant minds, and give an impulse to their powers which might result in vast good to the community; while an important benefit would be realized in checking the growth of licentious principles and habits.

In this work a wide range of effective labour will be presented before the American Sunday-school Union. They can, and surely they will, occupy the field.

FREDERICK J. TEGDEN

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ESSAY

ON

THE USES AND ABUSES

OF

SABBATH SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

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CONSIDERATIONS
OF
THE USES AND ABUSES
OF
SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

GENERAL

CONSIDERATIONS

OF

THE USES AND ABUSES OF SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARIES.



In the early history of Sabbath-schools we find the practice prevailed of giving away books as premiums. The proficiency or general merit of the pupil was determined by the punctuality of his attendance, his good behaviour, and the number of verses or answers he had repeated from memory during some preceding period. The books thus bestowed were the child's property, to be taken home and kept as his own; and in large schools the number of books thus distributed often amounted to one or two hundred volumes at a time. The expense of this plan, it is obvious, could be borne by but few schools, and the variety of reading afforded to each child in the course of a year was very limited. Besides this, the practice of overloading the memory with verses and hymns fell into disrepute, and, together with the premium system, gave place to the better plan of limited lessons and circulating libraries, now so generally adopted in this country, and known, I believe, in no other country in the same form. Each child in our schools may have the reading of fifty-two books in the year, and may select them from a variety of several hundreds; and each of these books will also be open to all the other children who may be disposed to read them, and this for a series of years, or until the volume is worn out.

There are, however, partial evils attending this better plan. The time usually employed in regulating and distributing the library is considerable; the knowledge of the books, which is indispensable to the judicious use of them, is possessed by very few; and when a new and popular volume is added to the library (or even a half dozen of them) it may be weeks, or even months, before all those who wish to read them can have the opportunity.

But some of these evils are not necessarily incident to the system. They rather grow out of the imperfect and unskilful administration of it. And I hope to show good evidence of this in the progress of our inquiries; in the prosecution of which it is important to examine, in the first place, *the materials out of which a Sabbath-school library should be formed*. And under this head we must first determine by what rules the purchaser should be governed in the selection of a library. There must be a limit to the *class of books* which are suitable for this purpose; and to fix this limit we must know what are the legitimate objects or

uses of a Sabbath-school library. And it is apparent that they should be in strict accordance with the design of the school itself. THE LIBRARY IS THE TEACHER'S ADJUNCT OR AUXILIARY. It is to carry out, illustrate, and enforce the truths which the teacher inculcates. If the subject of the lesson, for instance, is the sinfulness, folly, and meanness of falsehood, the books called "*Robert, Margaret, and Maria*," or the "*Little Story Book*," or the "*First of April*," or the "*Little Deceiver Reclaimed*," will illustrate it to the children of the smaller classes; while "*Cousin Clara*" will do the same office for a larger class of girls, and "*The Only Son*" for a larger class of boys.

Of course, whatever would be a suitable subject for Sabbath-school instruction is a suitable subject for a Sabbath-school book; and whatever method of illustrating and enforcing religious truth would be proper for the teacher, is proper for the author. I do not mean that the style and manner are to correspond—this is neither practicable nor desirable. We should only require that the general character and bearing of the printed instruction should be in harmony with the general character and bearing of the oral; and that both should rest on the basis of inspired truth.

The best way of illustrating our principle is to take two or three actual cases. I have seen in several libraries lately, "*Six Months in a Convent*," and "*Supplement to Six Months in a Convent*." Now, the plain practical question which I would ask respecting these, and even books much less exceptionable than these, is—What great principle of religious truth do they serve to illustrate? What doctrine or duty of the Christian religion do they assist the teacher to apply and enforce? If none, we should hold them to be unsuitable for a Sabbath-school library. The same remark would apply to the "*History of Columbus*," "*Indian Wars*," "*Parley's Magazine*," "*The House I live in*," "*Evening Readings in History*," and from thirty to fifty others whose titles might be given. We should exclude, therefore, from the class of books out of which the library is to be selected all those whose DIRECT and MAIN purpose is not to aid the teacher in the business of religious instruction.

It may be objected that many pupils are so averse to religious instruction that it is as much as the teacher can do to retain them in the class, even with the most attractive books that can be furnished; and if it should be required of them to read a strictly religious work, it would surely drive them off. Hence the teacher feels bound to give them an entertaining history or some story book, with here and there a scrap of religious truth, smothered in amusing anecdotes or curious narratives.

We should reply to all this, that it is far better to provide extraordinary means for extraordinary cases, than to violate a sound principle to meet an emergency. If it is really necessary to hire the child to attend

the school, we would, in the first place, try to improve our mode of teaching and visiting, and adapt it more wisely to the peculiar temperament of such a pupil; and secondly, we would procure the entertaining book from some private source, and let it be a week-day matter, entirely without and aside from the school, between the teacher and the individual scholar. In the mean time, it should be our endeavour to form in the mind of the child a more correct judgment, and to remove those prejudices which are generally the offspring of ignorance or a perverted taste. We cannot doubt that, under proper training, a boy may be as deeply interested in the story of *Francke* and his wonderful enterprises, or *Pastor Oberlin* or *Colonel Gardiner*, as in the story of *Franklin* or *Bonaparte*; nor that a girl may contemplate the extraordinary scenes through which Mrs. Judson passed, with as much interest as she would feel in the history of Mary Queen of Scots or the Lady of the Manor. At all events, the purchaser of a Sabbath-school library cannot be expected to have in view such particular cases as we just now mentioned, but must make his selection with reference to the general wants of the school; and in doing this, should exclude, as we maintain, all books not directly calculated to favour and materially assist the teacher in a course of strict religious instruction.

A second rule we should propose would exclude from the class of books from which a library for the use of the pupils of a Sunday-school should be selected, all such as are unsuited in *character*, *size*, *style*, or *subject*, to the mass of pupils. Among books which are found in libraries, and which we should regard as unsuitable in *character* or *size*, or both, are "*Horne's Introduction*," "*Edwards on the Affections*," "*Sermons for Aged People*," "*Jay's Closet Exercises*," "*Owen on Spiritual-mindedness*," &c. &c. We could make out a catalogue of some fifty or one hundred volumes under this head. How far these books, or a selection of them, may be made useful as a library for *teachers*, this is not the place to inquire.

As examples of those which are unfit in respect to *style*, we should hardly know where to begin or where to stop. We are not for excluding every book which all children cannot understand, nor such as contain thoughts and expressions that will demand attention, study, and inquiry even in the most forward and intelligent of the school. Our views must be enlarged, and our knowledge increased, and our curiosity stimulated, by finding something which requires the exercise of the intellectual powers. These, like the bodily, are to be developed by effort and trial. And as, in teaching the little child to walk, we require him to come to us rather than wait for us to go to him, so, in leading the exercises of the mind, we do well to keep a little before it, in order that it may be the more excited to assist itself. But as it will not do in the former case to require the little fellow to leap over the table nor climb

the precipice, so, in the latter, we must not expect that the premature mind will take the force of expressions and illustrations which are scarcely intelligible to the wisest of its teachers.

One or more sentences of an objectionable character, in this respect, might occur even in a book which is, on the whole, well adapted to the library; but there are a score or two, perhaps, that have enjoyed not a little popularity among Sabbath-schools, the general style of which is altogether above the apprehension of those who use them. These we should, of course, put aside.

And finally, as to *subject*, we should limit the selection to such as are *strictly religious*, and adapted to the circumstances of childhood and youth. A grossly deistical book might be prepared with much more of religious truth in it, than can be found in many works on natural science which have free admission into our Sabbath-school libraries. The principle we would maintain is simply this—that the *leading subject* of every Sabbath-school library book should present distinctly to view one or more of the great principles of the Christian religion; and it should be wrought into the volume and exhibited in its various bearings, so that when the child has properly read the book, the truth and importance of this great principle shall make a deeper impression than any thing else about the volume. To illustrate our meaning, we will take "*Susan Ellmaker*," one of the late publications of the American Sunday-school Union, the design of which is to explain and illustrate the doctrine of the *resurrection of the dead*. There is no doubt, we think, that the child who reads this book will be readily interested in the personal history of Susan Ellmaker and of her old friend the gardener; but we apprehend that when the reading is finished, if it has been read with any degree of intelligence and serious attention, the deepest impression on the mind will be, *that the dead shall surely be raised*.

And not only should the subject be of this cast, but it should be sufficiently important and striking to justify its claim to such attention. Many juvenile biographies are published, which, when stripped of their ornaments, show nothing more striking in intellectual or religious character than may be found or produced in hundreds and thousands of surviving children. This is not the place to treat of still weightier objections to books of this class. The position we take is, that all books should be excluded from the shelves of the Sabbath-school library the subject of which is not suited to the circumstances of children and youth *in a Sabbath-school*. We have lately seen in several schools "*Mr. Pug's Notebook*," in which the habits of a hog are used to illustrate some of the evils of a bad temper. The pictures are chiefly concerned with the adventures of this animal; and though, once in a long while, religious truth is forced in, after the manner sometimes employed in giving impulse to the animal himself, it is not the main purpose or tendency of the book to make

religious impressions—and for the simple reason, that the *subject* itself is not suitable for a Sabbath-school library book. Some subjects are too high, others too low—some are trivial, others are ludicrous—others still are, from their very nature, inappropriate. Among the last, we might mention “Ellen, or the Visit of the Rod,” which treats of the impropriety of the marriage of professors of religion with those who are not professors;—or “Advice to a New-married Couple”—or “Lectures on Diet.” It is in this view, if in no other, that we should reject “The Rich Poor Man and the Poor Rich Man,” “Live and let live,” and others of the same kind, that are finding their way into Sabbath-school libraries, and have certainly a much better right there than many of the books already on the shelf. Yet it is perfectly obvious that, whatever may be their excellence as works for general reading or for common schools, they are not suited, in character or subject, to the purposes of a Sabbath-school library.

A third and most important point to be determined in selecting a Sabbath-school library is, *who is responsible for the character of the books?*

It would be well if every book proposed to be added to the library could be carefully examined beforehand by the superintendent or (where the school is connected with a particular church) by the minister. In case of their inability, the next best thing would be to have them so examined by some intelligent, judicious person connected with the school, to whom reference might be made in case any objection should arise to a particular volume. We are aware that it would be very difficult in many schools to find a person competent to this service and willing to engage in it; but if the parents and patrons of the school consider the officers of it competent to teach religious truth, they must be supposed competent to judge of the propriety and correctness with which the same truth is taught in the library books, which are really only so many assistants to the teachers. This is all theory, however. As a matter of fact, very few libraries are supplied with books upon such an examination by anybody. The usual course is, when the money is raised to replenish the library, to commit it to some person who is going where Sabbath-school books are to be had. The bookseller or keeper of the depository is told—“Here are five, ten, or twenty dollars, as the case may be, which our school has sent for books. Here is a catalogue of what we have;” or, if no catalogue is produced, “We purchased our last supply a year ago, and we want only such books as have been published within a year.” If the person charged with the business happens to be familiar with the subject, (an advantage very rarely possessed,) he is shown to a particular part of the store where this kind of stock is kept, and will be told to look for himself. He has two or three hours, perhaps, in which to select from thirty to one hundred volumes, and it is sufficiently obvious that his selection must be made very much in the dark.

We have an apposite illustration. A short time since I was tarrying for a day or two in one of the chief towns of New England, and in passing I saw a sign on which were inscribed, very conspicuously, the words "SABBATH-SCHOOL Books." Assuming the character of an inquirer for books of this class, I went into the store and asked the person in charge if he kept an assortment of Sabbath-school books? "We do." "Do you keep the publications of the American Sunday-school Union?" "We do." "I should like a copy of the Life of Peter. I believe that is one of their late publications." "Peter? Peter?" "Yes, sir." "Well, sir, we have not got that." "Have you the Harvey Boys?" "No, sir, I think not." "Bad Boy's Progress?" "Well, sir, suppose you step round and look at our shelves;" and thus I was very courteously introduced to his whole stock. I found but two or three volumes of the American Sunday-school Union's publications, and of the rest it may suffice to say, that it was a most heterogeneous collection. Several of the volumes have been decidedly condemned by the religious periodicals of the day—others, if not positively pernicious, were entirely irreligious in their character; and others still, were sufficiently condemned as Sabbath-school books by the names of their authors and publishers. I asked the bookseller if these might all be depended on as suitable for a Sabbath-school library? "Certainly," he replied, "or they would not be there, you may depend, nor would I sell what I supposed was improper." "I see here the *French Cabin Boys*; is that approved for Sunday-school libraries?" "I believe it is, sir." "And Mrs. Hofland's 'Sisters,' and 'The Robins,' shall I be safe in taking these?" "I presume you will, sir."

Now we have no doubt that the man was perfectly conscientious in selling these and other like books, and the worthy countryman might be perfectly conscientious in buying them; and after all they might be highly improper and injurious as Sabbath-school books, and might do irreparable mischief before they were even suspected of evil.

We might multiply illustrations of this point to almost any extent, and easily show that there is no safety for the purchaser even in what are sometimes called Sabbath-school depositories, but in a personal knowledge of the character of the books, or of the source whence they are obtained and to which they may be traced. To illustrate our position, we shall take the operations of the American Sunday-school Union.

Some person interested in the education of children and the advancement of Sabbath-schools, or disposed to profit by the labours of the pen, undertakes to write a book, perhaps a memoir of one who has died in his vicinity, or a sketch of some interesting scenes or incidents within his knowledge, which may furnish useful religious instruction. He completes his manuscript, submits it privately to one or two friends, who think well of it, and concludes to send it on to Philadelphia for publication. As soon as it is received at the Society's office, it is put into a

course of examination. By whom? There is a standing committee of eight men—viz. two Baptists, two Methodists, two Presbyterians, and two Episcopalians, three of whom, at least, read the manuscript and state in writing, each one for himself, whether he approves or disapproves of it as a Sabbath-school book. To perform this labour, personal comfort and convenience, as well as social enjoyments, are often foregone or abridged; and for their services in this behalf, they are unrequited except by the consciousness of doing good or preventing evil. For their fidelity and sound judgment, the character of the men, wherever it is known, is a sufficient guaranty.

When at least three, and sometimes four or five, have read and approved of this manuscript, it is submitted to the whole committee at a stated meeting, where there is an opportunity to read, examine, and discuss at large the merits of the work; to make inquiries and objections, or propose modifications; in short, the whole subject is open for consideration and decision. At such a meeting this manuscript is solemnly passed upon as suitable or unsuitable for a Sabbath-school library book. If any member of this committee object to the manuscript for any cause not removable—whether it be subject, style, tendency, or general character, it is returned to the author as unsuitable for our purpose. If it is approved, the terms of the copyright are adjusted, and the manuscript passes through the hands of an editor employed expressly for that service, that it may be duly prepared for publication. Now should this book prove to be improper, in any view, for a Sabbath-school library, it can be traced home at once. Its origin is told on its very face, and the very men who examined and approved of it, and gave it the sanction of the American Sunday-school Union, are well known and can be easily found. There is no way for them to evade the responsibility. We ask then, is not the fact that we have four or five hundred Sabbath-school library books resting on a distinct, direct, tangible responsibility like this, an important fact, not easily overrated? When the purchaser of a library book takes up a volume with the name of the American Sunday-school Union on the title-page, he has a positive assurance from several men of piety, intelligence, and good judgment, and not personally interested at all in the event of its sale, that that book is suitable for the Sunday-school library—that it contains sound scriptural instruction, and that it is free from sentiments offensive to any evangelical denomination. We cannot believe that this aid in the selection of a Sunday-school library is properly appreciated, and the grounds of our doubt will appear in the sequel.

It will be observed that we do not claim exclusive preference for the books of the American Sunday-school Union. So far as other publications are attended (*in fact*, not in form merely) with the same care, and have the same direct and tangible responsibility for their character, so

far, other things being equal, they may be entitled to the same confidence. It is true, however, we apprehend, that there is no society in this or any other country, organized on the same principle, that professes to publish Sabbath-school library books. There are several strictly denominational societies that publish books for the supply of their denominational wants. Such are the Sunday-school Societies of the Episcopal and Methodist churches, at New York; the Massachusetts Sabbath-school Society, (Congregational,) and the New England Sabbath-school Union, (Baptist,) both located at Boston. The publication of this class of books, however, so far from superseding the necessity of the American Sunday-school Union's operations, renders them still more important and valuable. Particular and limited wants are supplied by the former; general and universal wants by the latter. Their labours are important to their respective churches; those of the American Sunday-school Union to the church and the world at large. The latter can present, *without modification or admixture*, those grand, simple truths of revelation which the Holy Spirit employs for the conversion of sinners; the former can present the same truths in forms and phrases suited to the views of their own adherents respectively, but by that very process made unacceptable to others. The American Sunday-school Union can have no objection to their labours for their own edification, and they may gladly avail themselves of the Union's to supply the general mass of their Sunday-school library books. In purchasing the books of these societies for a school composed of children from different denominations, great care should be used not to violate the catholic principles on which such schools profess to be established.

There are some circumstances connected with the purchase and sale of these books, which are not generally understood, and which have a very important bearing on the subject. We beg the attention of the friends of Sabbath-schools to a brief explanation of them.

The American Sunday-school Union distribute throughout the Union a catalogue of their books and prices. These prices are fixed by a committee of unpaid, unprejudiced, and disinterested men, at the lowest point which will cover the expense of their publication, taking into view the whole series, and compensating for loss in one form by gain in another. Now it is thought important to the interests of the institution, that the people in Utica, Boston, Cincinnati, and St. Louis should get a copy of Helen Maurice, for example, as cheap as it may be had in Philadelphia or New York. The catalogue price of it is 21 cents, and the society says to the trader in either of the above places, Here is a book that costs us about 18 cents—we agree with the community to sell it at 21 cents—we wish you to take it and sell it to the people of your place who wish to buy; and to induce you to do so, you may have it for 19 cents. The two cents which are deducted will defray the expense of transporta-

tion, insurance, &c. and a little more ; you will of course sell it at the catalogue price, which is known to everybody. The trader replies, that it is no object to him to take books on such terms, unless it be to make up his assortment or accommodate his customers. That he can get Sabbath-school books by the bushel-basket full, and on much better terms, from booksellers generally, and from this and that and the other society, who do business as booksellers, and make a much larger profit by their sale. A single example will show how this may be done.

A printer and bookseller in the country, who keeps a depository of Sabbath-school books, recently told me that one of the publishing societies employed him to print one of their publications, and agreed to pay for the printing in the society's books. Suppose the printer's bill to be \$100, twenty-five per cent. of which is profit. He receives \$100 in books at fifteen or twenty-five per cent. discount from the catalogue prices—a discount the society can well afford to make, inasmuch as they pay for their work, on which they make one good profit, in their own books, on which they make another good profit. Of course the printer receives \$100 worth of books of the society at an actual cost to him of perhaps \$50—and these books he can sell out again to traders in Utica, Cincinnati, and St. Louis at twenty-five per cent. below the nominal price paid by him, and still realize a handsome profit. On the other hand, if he buys \$100 worth of books from the American Sunday-school Union, he probably pays \$90 for them in cash or acceptances. It is perfectly obvious, therefore, that as a mere matter of pecuniary interest he will buy and sell any books rather than theirs. This principle applies still more strongly to the great mass of books which are said on the title-page to be "designed for Sunday-school libraries," published by booksellers generally. In this mass may be found many valuable and excellent books, which we are always glad to find in Sabbath-school libraries, and of which hundreds and thousands have been called for and sold at the counters of the American Sunday-school Union. In the exchange of books among booksellers, this mass is distributed, and great profits are often realized on these exchanges. Hence, in almost all bookstores which keep a stock of library books, we find shelf after shelf loaded with all sorts and descriptions of books, the size or character or price of which do not absolutely forbid their being placed in such company. When, from this mass, one of the books of the American Sunday-school Union is taken up by a customer, the bookseller instantly feels that the very best bargain he can make with this book will yield but a meager profit, and though he may be disposed to convert even this into money rather than let it lie among dead stock, he will be strongly tempted to offer the inquirer some other book on which he makes twenty-five or fifty per cent. profit, and which, for aught he knows, will do as much good as the other, on which he makes not more than one or two per cent. Here, then, is a dilemma with three

horns. The society must either make larger discounts, which will oblige them to raise the catalogue prices, and of course tax the public for the profit of the bookseller, or they must sell their books for less than they cost, or suffer the disadvantages to which allusion has been made. For example, they can raise the price of Helen Maurice to 30 cents, and make a discount to the trader of thirty-three and one-third per cent., and yet save the cost of the book. But Sabbath-schools must pay the difference. They must give 30 cents instead of 21 cents for every copy of Helen Maurice they buy, in order that the bookseller may have the 9 cents as his profit on those he buys. As the books, and indeed the whole business of the American Sunday-school Union, may be considered as the stock and business of the benevolent, whose interests are first to be consulted? If it be asked what prevents the Sunday-school Union from adopting the ordinary principles of business which booksellers and other publishers adopt, we can only reply, that the design of the society to supply books at the lowest terms would be thereby defeated, and the peculiar character of its publications, as well as the organization of the institution, forbid the adoption of the common principles of the book-selling business. The reasons could be shown in detail if there were need.

We have gone into this investigation for the purpose of explaining why the seller of a Sabbath-school book is not ordinarily a disinterested judge of its merits. If he supposes (as most booksellers do) that the buyer must take care for himself, he will be most inclined to sell what yields the best profit, and as bookseller's stock, or the stock of publishers that deal on bookselling principles, yields the best profit, the sale of this stock will be urged, while the books of the American Sunday-school Union, which, from the very object and spirit of the institution, must have a fixed price, and that as low as possible, which cannot be put on the principles of the trade, will be kept back, or put forward only to secure Sabbath-school custom.

We do not object to this as unfair or improper in any sense, nor do we complain of it. We only mean to show the purchasers of Sabbath-school books, that they must look out for themselves, and either ascertain by examination the character of the books they buy, or rely on some known, permanent, direct, Christian responsibility.

To show how far the purchasers of libraries are influenced by the existence of such a responsibility as we have claimed for the books of the American Sunday-school Union, it may suffice to state, that we have examined, in the course of the past season, a large number of Sabbath-school libraries in cities and in the country, and the average number of these books found in them is from one-fourth to one-fifth of the whole number. In a library of 300 volumes, 75 will be the books of the American Sunday-school Union, 25 or 30 the books of denominational socie-

ties, and the residue (say 200) would be from the miscellaneous stock of booksellers. Among these last we have found Universalist and Unitarian books, which we have taken out and presented to the superintendent to his utter amazement and mortification, and we have also found a large number of books which we are persuaded the clergymen and judicious Christians of the place would instantly reject as unsuitable for a Sunday-school library.

If in the preceding remarks we may seem to attach undue importance to the imprint of the American Sunday-school Union, and too little to the general responsibility of publishers, we are misapprehended. We bear cheerful testimony to the merit and uprightness of the public press in this country. Book-publishers and booksellers, as a body, are among the most intelligent and enterprising classes of our citizens, and when we reflect upon the immeasurable mass of reading matter that is annually produced by their enterprise, we must admire the general utility and good tendency of their labours.

It is sometimes said by the superintendents of Sabbath-schools, "We receive the books of the American Sunday-school Union, and of one or two other publishing societies, without examination. The imprint is a sufficient guaranty for us." We are sorry to hear this language. We have as strong objections to some works published by societies as we have to the mass of Sabbath-school books published without any such sanction; and as every publishing society but the American Sunday-school Union is avowedly denominational in its character, and as there are many topics of deep interest which now agitate the public mind, and which may be inadvertently or designedly introduced, to the great prejudice of the institution and to the reproach of the Christian faith, we are satisfied that this indiscriminate admission of books, whatever their imprint may be, is attended with hazard, and we had much rather the publications of the American Sunday-school Union were submitted to the most rigid scrutiny of purchasers, and incur the risk of condemnation, than have them embraced with others in this general sentence of approbation.

The sum of our observations under this head is this—That those who purchase for Sabbath-school libraries should first obtain all the books they can find that have a direct and special responsibility attached to them upon the title-page, so that, if a single volume turns out to be exceptionable, it may be traced home to its source, where somebody may be found who may be held responsible to the Sunday-school community for its publication. No bookseller can be held thus responsible.

The class of books to which such a responsibility attaches probably exceeds *five hundred volumes*. If the purchaser requires a larger supply, we think he is bound to obtain it on the personal religious responsibility of some one known to him, and who knows the character of the book or

books purchased—or else upon his own examination of them before they are placed upon the shelves. A less rigid rule would not secure the end, nor is it required by the circumstances of the case.

This leads us to examine the nature and cause of the great demand for Sabbath-school books, which is so universally pleaded as a reason for haste and an apology for carelessness in the selection of libraries.

We hold that there are good and unexceptionable books to be had at a fair price, enough to supply the legitimate wants of Sabbath-school libraries, the character of which is fully guarantied, and of course there can be no necessity for introducing those that are not known to be suitable. And we moreover hold that an addition of from thirty to fifty volumes a year to a common Sunday-school library is as much as the interests of the school require or justify. These positions we shall attempt to establish.

A large majority of the Sabbath-schools in this country contain much less than 100 pupils. The latest returns we have seen do not give an average of sixty. In 81 schools in the city of New York, the returns show an average of 180 pupils. Probably this far exceeds the number in actual attendance. We have had no returns from the schools of Philadelphia for several years. In the largest school in New York, which returns 600 pupils, only 260 attended in March last; and of the whole number, but about two-thirds could read the Scriptures at all. We presume that the time has not been known in that school when more than 200 pupils took books from the library at one time. In ten of their largest schools, in which there is an average return of 280 scholars, they had an average attendance of 180 in March last, and an average library of 900 volumes. A faithful investigation would probably show that of these 180 not more than one-half use the library. Some are incapable of using it, from ignorance or tenderness of age; others have the same books, and more than they can read, at home; some have no desire to use it, and a few, perhaps, are denied the use of it, as a punishment. Here, then, we have ten volumes of religious reading to each scholar, or eighteen years' reading at the rate of a volume a week, without taking into the account the additions which are made during that period, amounting (at an annual increase of only fifty volumes) to 900 volumes more! In one of the ten schools which make up the above average, we find 1100 volumes and 66 pupils, three of whom do not read the Scriptures. This would probably furnish from fifteen to twenty volumes a year to each reading pupil, without interchange. Now, we hold this to be utterly preposterous. A million and a half of dollars would not supply our schools with libraries on this scale, though they were obtained at the rate of fifteen cents per volume, to say nothing of additions to the amount of fifty thousand or a hundred thousand per annum.



It may be well to look again for a moment to the precise object of a Sunday-school library. Here are one hundred children. Fifteen of them have more Sunday-school books of their own than they can read, and twenty are not sufficiently advanced to read a library book. Of the remaining sixty-five we may suppose that at least one-half attend a daily school, which, with necessary recreation and domestic duties, will occupy most of their time. On the Sabbath they have a Scripture lesson to get, which, if properly studied, will occupy from one to three hours. This, with the attendance on school and public worship, will consume most of the Sabbath. It is obvious, therefore, that very little time can be found by these for the profitable reading of a library book. There remain thirty-three pupils on whom we might depend to take books. Some of these, however, are averse to reading of any kind; others are fond of very different reading from that which the Sunday-school library affords, and indulge their vicious inclinations at home, not unfrequently with parental sanction; and a majority have seen the library so long, and are so accustomed to the titles, character, and outward appearance of the books, that they will promise themselves neither instruction nor amusement from the use of them. With all these exceptions, however, there will doubtless be found in every school some few children and youth who love to read Sabbath-school books, and who will always gladly avail themselves of the privileges of the library. For these, then, we must provide, and we should provide the **VERY BEST AND CHOICEST** books that the market affords or the wit of man can make. Not one vain, irrelevant, or superfluous thought or illustration should have a place in them. They should hold the very cream of religious instruction.

Not only so. The character of these books should be well known to the teachers in whose classes they circulate, and great skill should be employed in adapting the use of the library to the character, habits, and peculiar circumstances of the pupil; so that, as we intimated at first, the teacher shall find *the very book* that shall be his assistant, coming in at the right moment, with a full understanding of the pupil's case, and giving point and effect to the series of oral instructions which have been imparted from the lesson of the day. The book should, of course, be adapted, in size, &c., to the time which may be had for reading it, and all due allowance should be made for the impatience and frivolity of childhood, its incapacity for long or close application, and the immaturity of its powers, and consequent insufficiency to receive, understand, and rightly estimate the counsels of truth and wisdom.

Thus we have an imperfect view of the theory of the Sabbath-school library system, as we understand it. And we need not say how different from all this is the practical exhibition of heaps upon heaps of all sorts and descriptions of books, from 8vos. to 64mos., including all departments

of natural and moral science, and gathered together from all sources, so long as money or credit would hold out to buy, and the picture-loving, novelty-seeking children cried out for "New books! New books! Give—give—who will give us some new books?"*

And to crown the scene, there is often placed at the head of the heap some one who knows no more of the inside of the books than if they were in the Hebrew tongue, and he is required to distribute them by some arbitrary rule which gives the "Five Apprentices" to a girl, and "Letters to a Sister" to a boy; or, to take a less glaring instance of inconsistency, furnishes a boarding-school girl with "Olive Smith" or "Ann Connover," both written expressly for girls at service, and gives a girl at service "Cousin Clara" or "Ellen Carroll," both written expressly for girls at boarding-school. How could two persons play more completely at cross purposes than the author and the teacher in their respective operations?

It will be perceived that the view we have taken of the purpose and use of a Sunday-school library greatly reduces and simplifies the labour of selecting one. The purchaser may find, perhaps, within the compass of his own knowledge or that of the minister of the congregation, or he may receive from perfectly well known and responsible sources, a collection of at least five hundred Sabbath-school books. Surely out of all these he may gather up a library of three or four hundred volumes (if needed) of appropriate and attractive religious reading, which will suffice, and much more than suffice, as we apprehend, for the wants of ninety-nine in a hundred of the Sabbath-schools of the United States.

Suppose (if a supposition so incredible may be used even for argument's sake) that the prevailing notions on this subject should be abandoned, and the monstrous abuses of the system be so far corrected as to give us, for our libraries, a choice selection of well known and universally approved books from responsible sources, how would we use them?

We are aware of the multitude of experiments that have been tried, and of the approved and ingenious plans that now prevail for the distribution of libraries. There is in them all, however, so far as we know, one radical and fatal defect; *they do not require the teacher to be familiar with the character and design of the books.* In the absence of this grand

* The following extract from a late Sabbath-school periodical is worthy of preservation: "There is a strange prejudice in some quarters in favour of *new* Sunday-school books. Even a school that has never seen a dozen books will often be particular in ordering new ones. We would hint to such purchasers—1. That many of the oldest publications are the best. 2. That new ones cannot be issued so fast as to supply a library without the addition of old ones. 3. That the question with a wise teacher is, What book is best suited to this scholar? not, Which book will best please his eye? 4. That many branches of knowledge, which it is impossible for pupils to know, are treated in the old books, and may not be the subject of a future one. On all accounts it is best for every school to have every book, and to begin with the beginning."

feature, whatever may be the superiority of one system to another, they are altogether incapable of making the library an efficient auxiliary to the teacher, which, as we have before shown, is its great use and purpose.

For example. In a school we lately visited, the library was divided into three sections or departments. The first was filled with books from 24 pages to 72; the second with books from 72 to 200; and the third with books over 200 pages, or such as are designed chiefly for adult readers. From the first department children under seven years of age were directed to furnish themselves—those from seven to twelve years old were supplied from the second—and all members of the school over twelve might select from the whole library, but the volumes over 200 pages were particularly appropriated to them. In the first department, for the youngest children, might be found a volume on parental duties; in the second, for children between seven and twelve, "Porteus on Popery," "Pastoral Sketches," and "Foster on Decision of Character;" and in the third, for youth and adults, "Early Lessons," "Tales for the Nursery," &c. And even if such a library were confined to the publications of the American Sunday-school Union, such an arbitrary division would occasion the most ludicrous (if they were not most melancholy) instances of inconsistency. The "Missionary Manual," explanatory of the map of the world, would go into the infant classes, and "Infant's Progress" and the "Infant's Magazine" would all but fall into the hands of adults; while "Charles Clifford," "The Only Son," the "Life of Daniel," &c., would be excluded from all pupils under twelve years of age!

In another school this plan was followed into a much more minute division. The library was divided into forty-five departments, corresponding to the forty-five classes which composed the school. Each department contained ten or twelve books, from which the class with the corresponding number supplied itself. For example: Class No. 16 of girls supplied itself out of department No. 16, which was made up as follows:—

Travels of True Godliness,	Beloved Disciple,
Life of Boardman,	Gambier's Guide,
Life of Wilberforce,	Fireside Piety,
Bible Guide,	Reformed Family,
Six Months in a Convent,	Henry Martyn.

Among these are 8vos., 12mos., and 18mos.; and the size ranges from fifty pages to five times fifty. No one can fail to see the entire unsuitableness of such a selection of books to a well-organized Sabbath-school class of girls. The character of one of the books makes it improper for any class; and of the rest, one would think no common ingenuity must

have been employed to secure in so small a compass such a variety of subjects, style, and size. We need not multiply illustrations of the lack of skill and good sense which is apparent in many other methods of distributing a library. They were generally designed to simplify the process—to save the time of the school—to prevent confusion, or to secure a more thorough reading of the books. But they have failed—some in one respect and some in another; and even in schools where there is much intelligence and piety, and pains-taking in respect to the use of the library, a very slight examination of individual pupils confirms the opinion we just now expressed that the prevailing systems, even when administered under the most favourable circumstances, are radically and fatally defective. But what remedy do we propose? We condemn the existing modes. What better do we suggest?

We suppose every Sunday-school teacher is anxious to discharge his duty faithfully, and hence he is disposed to use every instrument within his reach that promises to aid him in the inculcation of truth. His first object is to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the character and views of his pupils, and then to prepare himself, as far as possible, to correct what is amiss in them, to guide them, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, into a knowledge and belief of the truth, and so to have them secure for themselves an interest in the great salvation. To this end he endeavours to furnish himself with a full knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and especially that portion which may be the subject of a weekly lesson; and while he humbly and diligently seeks the Divine influence to enlighten his own mind, his conviction is deep and habitual that without that influence the truth can never be made effectual to the conversion of his pupils. Among the aids which are offered to him in this high and solemn vocation is a Dictionary of the Bible, prepared expressly and at great expense for his use, containing a rich fund of biblical knowledge arranged under each important word of the sacred volume. Next is offered him a treatise on the Geography of the Bible, with maps, &c.; then a treatise on the Natural History of the Bible, with explanatory and illustrative engravings; and a treatise on the Antiquities of the Bible, embracing all the most important topics of inquiry respecting the origin, laws, customs, religion, and history of the Jewish nation. These, and a variety of similar works, introduce him to the *facts* of our holy religion, and then are thrown into his hands volume after volume, illustrating particular scenes and incidents of the sacred history, and designed to explain and enforce its doctrines and precepts. He is also furnished with question books, in which the substance of the Bible is divided into suitable sections for weekly study, and proper questions are raised on each topic, which the pupil is required to answer. These questions may be modified to any extent, and they allow the teacher any range he can wish for enlargement and illustration, or for the introduction of any

views of doctrine or duty which he may feel bound to inculcate; but, over and above all this, there are put within his reach some four or five hundred volumes, embracing almost every subject of Sabbath-school instruction, and treating of them in almost every variety of style and method. Each of these books is a silent assistant teacher, which he can send home with his pupil, as a kind of closet companion for himself and the whole family, whom it costs nothing to entertain, and from whom he and they can learn more fully the importance and bearing of the great truths of religion which may have occupied his attention in the Sabbath-school.

Now, suppose the teacher to be very anxious to preserve the impression made on the mind of a particular pupil by a lesson from the first fifteen verses of the third chapter of John—the discourse between Christ and Nicodemus. That great doctrine of regeneration by the Spirit of God has been the subject of instruction in the school, and this boy's mind seems to have been considerably interested in it. It is a critical moment—a very slight circumstance may excite still more his attention, stimulate inquiry, and deepen impressions, or divert the mind entirely, and blast every hope of the teacher's heart. Will he send that boy home with a man who, he knows, will talk to him all the way about astronomy or natural theology, and, when they arrived at the house, show him pictures and diagrams, and try experiments, &c. Would he not choose rather to give him the company of a judicious, kind, Christian friend, who would take an interest in his state of mind, and pursue and enlarge upon the great subject which has arrested the child's attention, explaining its difficulties, enforcing its vital importance, and showing its connexion with the highest and most momentous interests of the soul, and all this in a way far better, perhaps, than the teacher himself could hope to do it in? In other words; shall the boy's library book that day be the "Child's Book on Natural Theology" or "First Lessons in Religion?" The former may be an admirable book, and entirely proper for a Sunday-school library, but the question now respects only *the proper use* of the books in the library, not what is proper to be placed there. The teacher knows nothing of either book, or, if he knows them by the title *only*, he may suppose the former to be at least as suitable to the child's circumstances as the latter. If, therefore, by any arbitrary arrangement in the distribution of the books, the former falls to this boy rather than the latter, the teacher may not heed it, and yet the result of that arrangement may affect most disastrously the eternal well-being of the boy. Probably it would have been far better for him if the library had never been open.

Suppose, however, that the teacher is familiar with the character of these two books. He knows that "First Lessons" contains a familiar and striking exhibition of the great doctrines of the incarnation and

atonement of Jesus Christ, and of the nature and evidences of regeneration ; and that if he can, by any motive presented to the lad's mind, prevail on him to take this book home and read it attentively, he will probably preserve and deepen the impression which he tremblingly hopes is made on his mind. He addresses him thus :

" Charles, here is a little book which I should be glad to have you read. I have read it myself with a great deal of interest, and, I trust, not without profit. I have selected it for you at this particular time, because I think it may be especially interesting to you ; and I will take it as a personal favour if you will read it with attention, and tell me next Sabbath what you may learn from it. I have put a mark at two of the chapters which deserve to be read and much thought of. I should be glad to be with you myself; but as this is not in my power, I give you this silent but profitable companion, whom you can consult at every leisure moment of the week. The Bible you always have as the great source of knowledge, and this little book is valuable only so far as it leads you to the Bible for direction, and to the author of the Bible for grace to help you in every time of need."

When the next Sabbath comes, and the lesson for the day has received due attention, Charles is called upon for an account of his book, and the class is invited to attend to his answer. The leading subjects of the book are then brought out to view, and especially those of the two most important chapters. The teacher is enabled to judge of the strong or weak points in the pupil's apprehension of truth, to correct what is erroneous, and to establish and enforce what is sound and true. The rest of the class can scarcely avoid being interested in such an examination, and the fifteen or twenty minutes thus spent are often worth more than all the rest of Sabbath-school time. The teacher may, moreover, so manage his questions and answers as to excite a desire in one or more of the other boys to read the same book ; and in the end, the contents of that volume—the preparation of which may have cost months of labour and been attended with many fervent prayers—will become the possession of every mind in the class, and remain so to the end of life.

Perhaps we shall be told that all this looks very well upon paper, but where are the teachers who are competent and willing to go through all this laborious service ? We ask in reply, where are the teachers that are willing to do their duty ?

We do not suppose that Sunday-school teachers can serve two masters any more than other Christians, nor would we impose upon them double duty to one master. If the teacher's time is to be divided between one meeting on this evening and another on that—now distributing tracts and now collecting subscriptions—here a committee-man, and there a director or manager, and here again a secretary, it is to be expected that he will do nothing as it should be done. The Sabbath-school system

never was, and never can be, sustained and carried out by such labours. It must have undivided strength and undivided affection—men and women must enter into it with all the heart, and be diverted by nothing but the absolute interposition of Providence to suspend their labours or call them away.

Perhaps, however, it may seem to some who admit the reasonableness of our views, utterly impracticable to obtain such a knowledge of the library as is above supposed, even with all the attention they can bestow; but we believe there are very few who could not obtain it with ease, if they felt its importance and had a mind to the work.

We will suppose a teacher to be just commencing his official labours. He has a class of eight boys, from ten to thirteen years of age, all able to use the library. He is occupied in a business that consumes all his time day by day. The evenings, however, are his own, though for most of them he has indispensable employments, at lectures, prayer meetings, teachers' meetings, social duties, and private business, so that there is left for him not more (say) than five hours in the week in which to prepare himself for his Sabbath-school labours. Three hours of that time must be given to the lesson, and the other two will be left for the library. Now, there are nearly 200 bound books on the catalogue of the American Sunday-school Union alone, ranging from 36 to 126 pages, with any one of which a teacher of ordinary abilities can make himself acquainted in two hours. Of some of them he could read two or three volumes every week. For the first week, let him take "The Watch Chain," (54 pp.); 2d week, "Bad Boy's Progress," (54 pp.); 3d week, "Harvest," (54 pp.); 4th week, "Memorial for Sunday-school Boys," (72 pp.); 5th week, "Robert Benton," (72 pp.); 6th week, "The Good Son," (72 pp.); 7th week, "Christ our Saviour," (72 pp.); and 8th week, "The Bible is True," (90 pp.) This series we might extend to the fifty-two weeks of the year were it necessary, but our purpose will be answered by the term of eight weeks, corresponding to the number in the class. Having read "The Watch Chain" carefully, so as to retain in his memory a general impression of its leading incidents and design, he says to one of the class, "John, I have selected a library book for you, which I have read with some care; I wish you to read it carefully, and tell me next Sabbath what you think about it. If there is any thing in it which you think wrong, or which you do not understand, I shall expect you will tell me what it is." So he gives John the book, and takes home for himself "The Bad Boy's Progress," which he examines in like manner. When the Sabbath comes, John is there with his book, on which he is examined sufficiently to determine whether he has read it properly, and the opportunity is improved to correct, explain, illustrate, or enforce the truth, as circumstances may require, not to him only, but to the whole class.

"The Watch Chain" is then given to Thomas, and the "Bad Boy's Progress" to John. As two boys are to be examined on their books the next Sabbath, the time for each must be apportioned accordingly; and when the series of eight books is finished, it may not be practicable to do any more, ordinarily, than simply ask three or four general questions of each boy. As for example: on the book for the eighth week, "The Bible is True," the pupil might be asked why the fulfilment of prophecy is an evidence of the truth of the Bible? And what one prophecy he can name that has been remarkably fulfilled? Two questions like these would sufficiently test his knowledge of the volume. And if in any case it appeared that due attention had not been given to it, the book should be left in his hands until it is properly read. If this stock of eight books has been judiciously selected, it will last this class, by interchanges, until the teacher has an opportunity to examine another, and, if he pleases, a larger series; as the Life of Edwards, Oberlin, Spener, Knox, Newton, Thomason, Brauerd, Eliot, Pearce, The Harvey Boys, The Ringleader, &c. These open a much wider and more interesting field of inquiry; and, if it were necessary, he could now and then lay hold of a new book, and prepare himself in the same way to make it useful to his class. In cases of particular interest, like the one supposed a few moments since, he must vary his course; and where an extraordinary case is to be provided for, the ordinary *routine* must be temporarily interrupted. If it should be asked, how we would supply the wants of several teachers who may all fix their eye on one volume for a like purpose? we would reply, that there are several books in every well-selected Sunday-school library that treat more or less fully on the particular doctrines of salvation. It is not probable that several minds would be found in precisely the same stage of impressions on the same Sabbath; and whenever the general state of the school is one of deep and anxious solicitude about the soul, it is not probable that godly teachers or sincere inquirers would be conversant with much else besides the Bible and the place of prayer.

It will be observed that we have supposed the case of one whose time is very limited. Most teachers, especially females, need find no difficulty in keeping ahead of their classes in the use of the library; and at any time the reading of the class can be suspended a while, to afford the teacher an opportunity to secure this advantage.

We hold, that such a kind and degree of knowledge of the library, as has been supposed, is essential in the teacher in order to the proper use of the library by the pupil, because no less will enable the teacher to select, direct, and improve the pupil's reading. The office of librarian in a Sabbath-school is, for the most part, merely mechanical. He enters, arranges, and distributes the books, and keeps them in due order. But as to any knowledge of the contents of this or that particular volume, or

of the relative fitness of books and their readers, few librarians would make the least pretension, or could maintain it if they did. In truth, it is in the nature of things impossible that the librarian can know the character, circumstances, and attainments of sixty children, so as to be able to determine what book is suitable for them each Sabbath, whatever might be his knowledge of the books themselves. The teacher, and he alone, possesses, or should possess, the proper knowledge of both. There is, therefore, no alternative. If the teacher is not familiar with the books, at least sufficiently so to make it his intelligent and seasonable auxiliary ; the library, that most important and expensive appendage of the school, must be of very limited, uncertain, and temporary value to the pupils. It is worthy of particular remark in this connexion, that every term of three or four years makes an entire change in the face of the school. Perhaps one-half of the children who have had the advantages of the library have gone away, and their places are supplied by others to whom the old books are all new. Of course the labour of the teacher is not to be repeated with every successive rank of pupils. The teacher who is once acquainted with two or three hundred standard volumes, and who adds to this stock fifteen or twenty new books in a year, need not fear any deficiency in this branch of his qualifications.

If it should be said, that though the attainment of such a knowledge of the library, as we would require, is practicable, yet it imposes altogether too severe a task upon teachers ; we reply, that if our libraries are to contain one or two thousand volumes, this objection would certainly be very forcible ; and we will even admit that, on the reduced scale which we propose, a much more laborious and systematic attention would be required of teachers than is now generally bestowed. But though the process would be slow, and perhaps months might elapse before it could be made of practical advantage, yet the result would be worth all it could cost, and much more. It increases the teacher's power and influence beyond all estimate ; it economizes time, money, and intellectual labour, and gives efficiency and endless utility to what is otherwise of little more than nominal advantage to the school. And in a negative view, we avoid the necessity of very large libraries, obtained at great expense not of money only, but of care and discrimination in the selection of books, and after all at great hazard ; managed with great loss of time and labour, so great as to have occasioned, in many instances, an abandonment of the whole thing ; and distributed without just reference to the age, capacity, or circumstances of the pupils ; often furnishing to the youngest that which is fit only for the eldest, to the ignorant that which will profit only the intelligent, and to the most thoughtless that for which only the most reflecting have any taste. So that if we would secure for the teacher, in the most direct and certain way, the

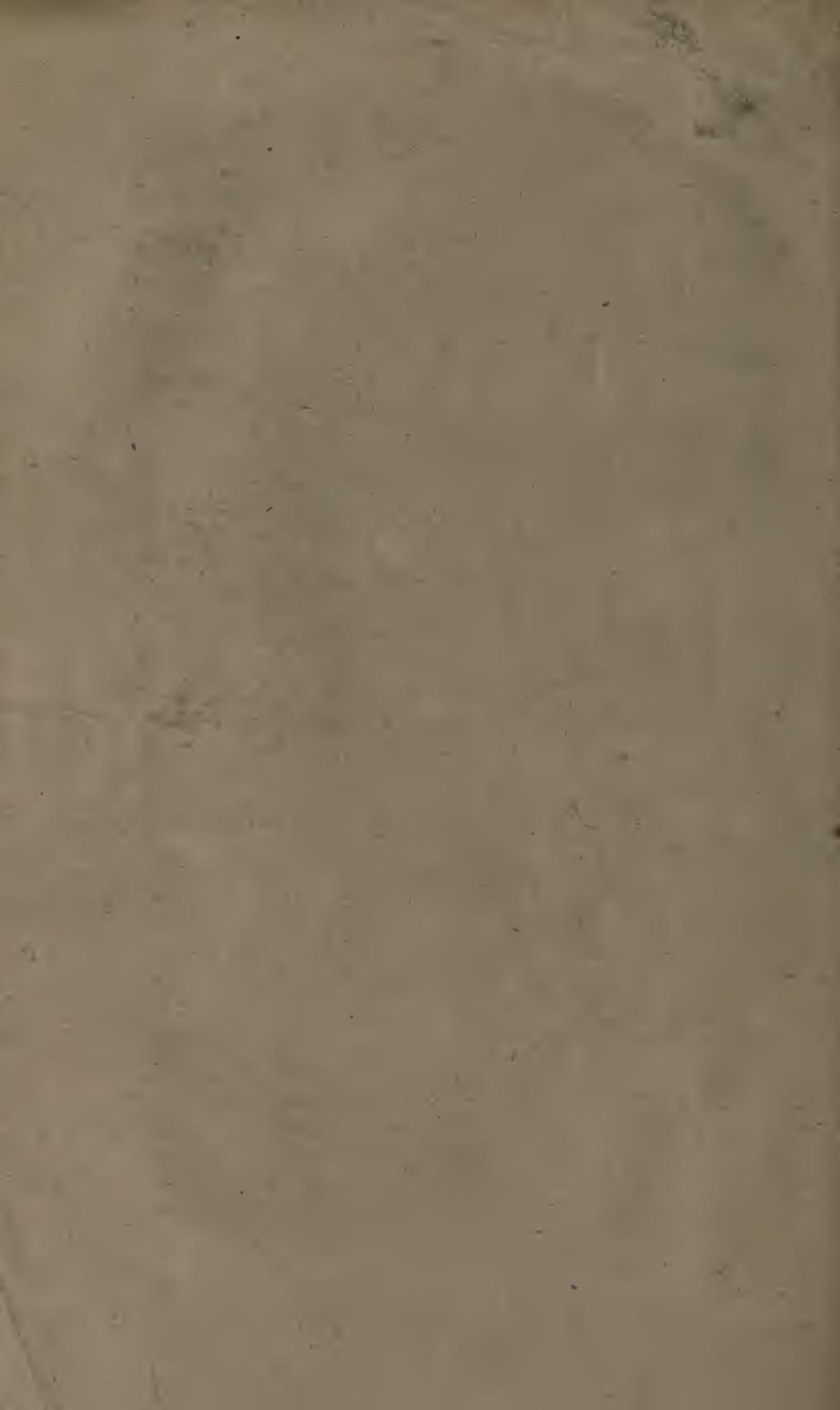
proper fruit of his labours, we would persuade him to adopt what is here presented as the better plan.

If he is disposed simply to retain his place as teacher, caring nothing for the result of his teaching, and giving himself no anxiety lest his negligence, or indolence, or unskillfulness should make it vain, or worse than vain, no exhibition of his duty, however just and appropriate, would be likely to excite him.

If, on the other hand, he is engaged with his whole heart in the great and good work, and is only anxious to know how he can most acceptably fulfil his obligations to his Lord and Master, we shall depend on his diligent and prayerful consideration of the views we have now suggested. Our motto should be, "*On—unto perfection.*" (Heb. vi. 1.) Though some one of the present methods of distributing library books may be very good, in many respects, still if there is, or may be, a better, let us look carefully until we find it. And if some of the views we have presented in this article shall be found defective or erroneous, or should seem to involve too much change, let them be diligently examined by the light of truth; and whatever is unsound and fallacious, give to the winds.

Christian men and women, we are associated together in the great and glorious design of diffusing a knowledge of Christ and of his salvation among the children and youth of our country, and indeed throughout the world. Such views have now been suggested respecting one of the most important agencies within our control, as the observation and experience of a single individual have furnished. If they commend themselves to the conscience and good sense of those who purchase or use Sunday-school libraries, we shall hope to see them adopted. At all events, let but the benign influence of the gospel extend from shore to shore, and from pole to pole, and we would be well content to let our plans for its propagation die and be forgotten.





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